

## **SNOW AND ICE CONTROL PRODUCTS SPECIFICATIONS (or WHY THE PNS ORGANIZATION WAS FORMED)**

Transportation agencies within the states of Washington, Oregon, Montana and Idaho and the province of British Columbia formed a committee several years ago to develop specifications for chemicals related to snow and ice control. This committee has evolved to become the Pacific Northwest Snowfighters (PNS) Association. The association is comprised of technical experts in the fields of chemistry, environment, maintenance operations and management, insurance law and claims, public affairs and purchasing. The association has been privileged to work with the foremost pioneers in deicing technology.

The members share the Columbia-Snake River Basin drainage and share similar geographic, climatological and environmental conditions that govern the choice of chemicals, work methods and equipment for snow and ice control. Although the focus of the association has been protection of sensitive resources specific to the Northwest, numerous other agencies with winter maintenance responsibilities have committed to adopt the specifications, based on environmental and performance considerations.

While considerable information has been developed on the environmental consequences of salts, significant bodies of research are just being developed on the environmental effects of other deicing chemicals. Public agency interest in environmental effects of winter maintenance practices continues to be high. The association has embraced the opportunity to address environmental issues associated with the use of corrosion inhibited chemical deicers.

The mission of the PNS is to provide specifications for the highest quality products balancing quality of environment with providing the safest possible transportation system and maximum mobility for the traveling public during snow and ice conditions, within reasonable budgetary, product performance and environmental constraints. Stringent quality control elements have also been developed in conjunction with manufacturers, distributors and transporters that will enable users to track product quality through batch and lot numbering systems.

The PNS continually evaluates the latest technological advances on the effectiveness of deicers and winter operations equipment. The committee couples that information with the latest environmental impact data and challenges the industry to accommodate the needs of winter maintenance operations in the Northwest.

The association has developed specifications for nine categories of snow and ice control materials, including performance specifications for corrosion inhibitors. The corrosion inhibitor specifications represent one of the most stringent testing methods. Testing is an ongoing process in the PNS as new products and equipment are continually being evaluated in the spirit of continuous improvement in all areas of winter operations.

The PNS developed specifications for numerous categories of products to enable users to choose from a wide range of the best products available on the market. By consolidating

the resources and purchasing power of the member agencies, the association anticipates that the quality and cost of these products will become more favorable and are considering the challenges and feasibility of developing a contract for use by the entire PNS membership.

The association is excited for the opportunity of any interested governmental bodies and transportation agencies to adopt these specifications and to provide input to the association to further refine the specifications in the future. Through the PNS [web site](#), you are able to access information about PNS, products and related reports as well as become a member of this organization.